

Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose

The Hoschton Comprehensive Plan provides city elected officials, staff, and residents with a set of goals and policies to help manage future growth and development over the next twenty years. The Plan establishes a framework for planning for the provision of public facilities and services, choosing desirable economic growth, preserving the natural environment, protecting unique historic building or districts and scenic areas, and establishing compatible future land uses.

Planning Process

The Plan consists of a three-step planning process: Inventory and Assessment of existing conditions, Goals and Policies, and Implementation Strategy. The Inventory and Assessment addresses the seven planning elements using the basic planning process required by the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures of the Georgia Planning Act. The Goals and Policies are based upon the inventory and assessment, and address existing and future needs and aspiration of the community. The Implementation Strategy is a five-year work program based on the community needs and goals.

Inventory and Assessment

The Inventory and Assessment lists the resources within Hoschton and addresses the following seven elements. The adequacy of the community's resource base is assessed based on identified needs through meetings with elected officials, city employees, and residents.

- (A) **Population:** The population element provides historic population statistics as well as projections of future population trends in the city. This data is analyzed in increments from 1980 until 2023. Also included are data on the numbers of households, education levels, gender and race composition, and income of the population, as well as a comparison of the city, Jackson County, the Northeast Georgia region, and the state.
- (B) **Economic Development:** The economic development element examines various aspects of the city's economy, including employment by industry, the labor force and an analysis of the economic base.
- (C) **Natural Resources:** The natural resources element includes the environmentally sensitive and ecologically significant areas that are unique to Hoschton. Included in the inventory are discussion of soil types, hydrology, topography, prime agricultural land, forest resources, plant and animal habitats, wildlife, parks and recreation areas, wetlands, and watersheds.
- (D) **Historic Resources:** The historic resources section catalogs the historic sites and structures in Hoschton, including individual properties, historic areas, and archaeological sites.
- (E) **Community Facilities:** The community facilities section inventories existing public facilities and service that are important to the safety and well being of Hoschton residents. This section addresses, in particular, law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical services, infrastructure, solid waste management, governmental, recreational, educational and cultural facilities.
- (F) **Housing:** This element provides an inventory of the existing housing supply in Hoschton and includes an assessment of the quantity, quality, cost and age of housing, as well as projected demand for the various categories of housing units.
- (G) **Existing Land Use:** The land use element of the plan surveys existing land uses at the tax level. Categories of land use include parks, recreation and conservation; agriculture, including crop forest; commercial; residential (single-family and mobile homes, and multi-family housing);
- (H) industrial; public/institutional; government; transportation, communications and utilities; and undeveloped or unused properties.

Statement of Needs and Goals

Based on the inventory and assessment, existing needs are identified. Goals and objectives are developed to meet identified needs of each jurisdiction. While the plan's goals and policies are a product of perceptions formulated by the public, city officials, and community leaders, they are also consistent with, and supportive of, the statewide planning goals as stated in the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures.

Implementation Strategies

Based on the needs assessment and goals and policies, a strategy to put the plan into action was prepared. This section of the plan includes a five-year work program that outlines projects and programs to meet identified needs and to achieve future goals. These programs are outlined on a year-by-year basis, and will need to be completed or underway by the year 2006.

The work program should be reviewed annually not only to note accomplishments, but also to determine adjustments in the work program. The work program is a realistic plan of local activities; however, circumstances, particularly financial, may necessitate adjusting the work program.

Public Participation

The first public hearing was held on April 17, 2003 prior to the preparation of the plan. Meeting began with the Advisory Committee immediately after the first public hearing and continued through August 2003.

The final document was presented at a public hearing on September 9, 2003.

Plan Products

Preparation of the Hoschton Plan followed the guidelines provided in the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures. This plan consists of an Inventory and Assessment; Goals, Policies, and Objectives; an Implementation Strategy; and Existing and Future Land use maps.

To be an effective tool for planning, general procedures must be followed in the utilization of the Plan.

- (A) Both the land use map and plan document should be applied together during the evaluation of any development alternative and proposals.
- (B) The Plan's policies must be applied in a practical flexible manner in order to ensure that they will be responsive to new opportunities and changing conditions.
- (C) The Plan will be implemented through a coordinated program establishing short, idle, and long-term courses of action.
- (D) The Plan should be used as a framework for guiding and coordinating planning where possible. This includes future development and transportation improvements, parks and recreation facilities, schools, fire stations, water and sewer systems, and other community facilities.